A DISCOURSE

Concerning the

Nature, Unity, and Communion

OF THE

Catholick Church.

Wherein most of the

CONTROVERSIES

Relating to the

CHURCH,

Are briefly and plainly Stated.

PART I.

By *WILLIAM SHERLOCK*, D.D.
Master of the *Temple*.

LONDON:
Printed for *William Rogers* at the *Sun*, over against St. *Dunstan's* Church in *Fleetstreet*. 1688.

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The Introduction.

IN *the Preface to* the Vindication of ſome Proteſtant Principles of Church-Unity and Catholick Communion, from the charge of Agreement with the Church of *Rome*, *I promiſed a Diſcourſe about the Church, and intended to have diſcharged that Obligation, which has been very importunately demanded of me, long before this; and indeed had finiſhed, what I now publiſh, ſeveral months ago: I ſhall not trouble my Reader with the Reaſons why I*

then

then laid it aside; I hope The Preservative against Popery *will satisfie him, that I have not been idle in the mean time: but the true and only reason why I have delayed to publish this Part, which has been so long finished, was because I intended to finish the whole before I published it, which would have given more general satisfaction to my Readers: But I have not leisure for that now, and think it more advisable to publish a part than none at all, especially since what I here publish is an entire Discourse concerning the Nature and Unity of the Catholick Church.*

It is sufficiently known, that there is no Argument of greater consequence in our Disputes with the Church of Rome, *than the Unity and Authority of the Catholick Church. Nothing will serve them but to make the Church of* Rome *the Catholick Church, and then no body is a Member of the Church Catholick, who is not in Communion with the Church of* Rome; *and since no body can be saved but in the Church, all Hereticks and Schismaticks, who are not in Communion with the Church of* Rome, *must be damned, and there is a sad end of us all.*

Thus the Catholick Church is an Infallible Teacher of Faith: for who dares say, that the Catholick Church can fail, or err in Fundamentals? since Christ himself has promised that the

Gates

Gates of Hell shall not prevail against his Church: and therefore the Church of Rome, *which is the Catholick Church and Principle of Catholick Unity, must be Infallible; and no Christian ought to dispute any thing which she has determined in matters of Faith.*

The Bishop of Rome *is the Head of this Catholick Church, St.* Peter's *Successor, and Christ's Vicar upon Earth, and therefore he is the Supreme Governour of the Church, from whom all other Bishops derive their Authority, and to whom all Christian Princes and Emperours themselves are subject* in Ordine ad Spiritualia, *which will go a great way to a Temporal Soveraignty, and Universal Empire.*

These pretences indeed have been sufficiently baffled by Protestant Divines, ever since the beginning of the Reformation; but we have to deal with men who have confidence enough to be baffled and not to own it, to see all their Arguments confuted an hundred times over, and to repeat them again with a good grace, without replying to those Answers which have been so often given them, or so much as taking notice that there ever had been any Answer made to them.

But after all that is said on one side and t'other, I am very sensible there never will be an end of

these Wranglings, without setling the true Notion of the Catholick Church; which, though a great many good things have been said about it, I think was never thoroughly done yet: what my present Performance is, I must leave other men to judge; but if my Notion be right, I am sure there is an end of all the vain and arrogant Pretences of the Church of Rome, *as will appear to any indifferent Reader, who peruses this Discourse with Care and Judgment.*

The foundation of all I have laid in an Inquiry into the true Notion of the Unity of the Church Catholick; which gives occasion to state the true Notion of the Church, and most of those Controversies which depend on it. I have here only considered what is meant by the Unity of the Catholick Church, as that signifies the whole Church of Christ both in Heaven and Earth, and the whole Church of Christ on Earth. What relates to the Nature and Unity of particular Churches, their Government, Union, and Combinations into one Catholick Communion, must be reserved for a Second Part.

ERRATA.

Page 5. line 3, for intent, r. extent. p. 5. l. 13. for for, r. far. p. 32. l. 15. for universal, r. univocal.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the Unity of the whole Catholick Church in Heaven and Earth.

IT is acknowledged by all Christians, that Christ has but One Church, which is his One Body: but then we must consider the intent of this One Church. The Church on Earth indeed is but One, but this One Church on Earth is not the One Church and One Body of Christ, but only a very little part of it. Christ has but One Church and One Body in all, and therefore it must comprehend the whole Church from the beginning to the end of the World, at least from the first planting of a Church by Christ and his Apostles till the last Judgment, for they all belong to this One Church, and this One Body of Christ; so that for the greatest part of this One Church is already translated into Heaven, and the Church on Earth is but a very little part of the whole; for the Church in Heaven, and the Church on Earth, are but One Church, and One Body. Here we must lay the foundation, if we would rightly understand what makes One Church; for since this Unity comprehends the whole Church, we cannot argue meerly from the Churches being One, to infer any other kind of Unity, but what makes the whole, but what unites the whole Church in Heaven and Earth into One Body, for that only

only is the true Unity of the Church, becauſe the whole Church in Earth and Heaven is the One Church. And therefore to place the Unity of the Church in any thing, which can concern only one part of the Church, but not the whole, as ſuppoſe, that part only which is on Earth, not that which is in Heaven, is manifeſtly abſurd, becauſe it does not give an account, how the whole Church is One, and yet the Oneneſs of the Church properly relates to the whole, not to a part: for a part be it never ſo much One, can be but One part, not the One Church. Now hence we may learn, wherein the Unity of the Church does not conſiſt, and wherein it does.

1. Wherein the Unity of the Church does not conſiſt. As 1. The Unity of the Church does not conſiſt in its being One organized Politick Body, under the government of One viſible Head on Earth: for tho a viſible Head on Earth might make the Church on Earth One, yet it cannot unite the Church on Earth and the Church in Heaven into One Body, unleſs this viſible Head on Earth be the Head of the inviſible Church in Heaven too: for if the Unity of the Church conſiſts in being united under One Head, that Head muſt be the Head of the whole Church, or elſe the Church is not united in the Head, if the Head, which is the principle of Union, be not the Head of the whole. Now I ſuppoſe, no Papiſt will ſay, that the Biſhop of *Rome* is the Head of the inviſible as well as of the viſible Church, and then the Church is not one, by being united under the Biſhop of *Rome*; tho there are ſome things, which would make one ſuſpect, that the Church of *Rome* did believe the Pope to be the Head of the inviſible as well as of the viſible Church; for if his Authority be confined to the Church on Earth, one would wonder,

der; whence he should pretend to canonize Saints in Heaven, or to release Souls out of Purgatory, unless his being Christ's Vicar on Earth makes him his Vicar in Heaven, and in Purgatory also; but this by the way.

If they say, that when they speak of the Unity of the Church, they mean only the Unity of the Church on Earth, and that the Pope is the visible Head of this Unity.

I answer, 1. That they must grant then, that they speak very improperly; for the Church on Earth is not that One Church, which is the One Body of Christ, and therefore the Unity of the Church does not consist in the Headship of the Pope; but they ought only to say, that the Unity of the Church on Earth consists in its Union to the Pope.

2. And therefore they must quit all their Arguments for the Pope's Headship, taken from the Churches being *One*, the *One Body of Christ*; for the Church on Earth is not this One Body of Christ, and therefore it does not follow, that because Christ has but one Body, therefore the Church on Earth must have one visible Head.

3. Nay they must confess, that the formal and essential Unity of the Church on Earth does not consist in its Union to the Pope. For the Church on Earth is One with the Church in Heaven, they being both but One Church, and therefore must have the same essential Unity; for how they should be one by two sorts of Unity, that is, be one without the same formal Unity, is very mysterious, and bears akin to a contradiction. And therefore since the Unity of the Church in Heaven does not consist in its Union to the Pope, no more does the Unity of the Church on Earth, the

Unity

Unity being the same in both. And thus all their Arguments from the Unity of the Church on Earth, to prove an Universal Visible Head of the Church, are lost too.

2*ly*. Nor does the Unity of the Church consist in joyning together in the external and visible Acts of Worship, or in maintaining mutual intercourse and correspondence with each other; these are Duties which result from Church-Unity, when they are practicable, (as I shall shew more hereafter) but the Unity of the Church cannot consist in them, for the Church in Heaven and Earth are one without them; and so may distant Churches on Earth be one Church without any such visible correspondence.

3*ly*. Nor can the Unity of the Church consist in such Articles of Faith as have not always been the Faith of the Christian Church. For since the whole Church in all Ages is but One, it can have but One Faith, and that cannot be the One Faith, which has not been the Faith of the whole Church. And therefore it is ridiculous to talk of such a Power in the Church of every Age, as to make or declare new Articles of Faith, unless there be Authority to make a new Church too in every Age; but then how the Church should change its Faith in every Age, and yet continue one and the same Church, is worth inquiry. As far as any Church has altered the Faith of the Apostles and Primitive Christians, it is become a new Church, and a new Church, I think, is not the same with the old; the Unity of the present Church, considered as a Church, does not consist only in its Unity with it self, but with the Church also of former Ages; for unless it be one with the Apostolick Churches, it cannot be the One Church of Christ: and therefore tho' all the Christian World should at this Day

unite

unite in the Faith and Worſhip of the *Council of Trent*, it would be as much divided from the One Church of Chriſt, as it differs from the Faith and Worſhip of the Primitive Church.

I ſhall only obſerve here by the way, what a contradiction the Worſhip of Saints and the Virgin *Mary*, is to the belief of One Church. For if the Church in Heaven and in Earth be but One Church, then the moſt glorious Saints in Heaven, not excepting the bleſſed Virgin herſelf, are but Members of the ſame Body with us, which makes it as abſurd to Worſhip them in Heaven, as it is for one Member of the ſame Body on Earth to Worſhip another, for they are the ſame Body ſtill, and tho there is a great difference in honour between the Members of the ſame Body, yet that relation that is between them will not admit of the Worſhip of any Member. For it is no Act of Communion in the ſame Body, for one Member to Worſhip another. To pay Divine Honours, to erect Temples and Altars to the greateſt Saints, advances them above the degree of Fellow-Members, and if they be not Fellow-Members of the ſame Body, then the Church in Heaven and in Earth is not One Church. From whence we may learn who they are who divide the Unity of the Church, they who command the Worſhip of Saints and the Virgin, or thoſe who refuſe it. We believe the Church in Heaven and Earth to be the One Body of Chriſt, and that the moſt glorious Saints are but Members of the ſame Body with us, and therefore not the Objects of our Worſhip, but of our Brotherly Love and Honour; but thoſe who Worſhip Saints deſtroy the Unity of Chriſt's Body, by dividing the Church on Earth and the Church in Heaven, for nothing is more contrary to the ſenſe of Mankind than to Worſhip thoſe of our

own Communion. And therefore the natural Interpretation of that Worship they pay to Saints is, that they are not Members of the same Body with us, but are as much above us, as the Object of our Worship is and ought to be.

2*ly*, This Notion of Church-Unity, that it must include the whole Church, from the beginning of Christianity, to the end of the World, as well that part of it, which is already transplanted into Heaven, as that which still sojourns on Earth, which is all but one Body, may direct us, wherein to place this Unity of the Church, which to be sure can consist in nothing, but what belongs to the whole Church: any Notion of Unity, which does not explain, how the whole Church is but One, must be false, because the Unity of the Church properly belongs to the whole, and not to a part. Now as this Unity respects the whole Church, it is impossible, there should be any other Head of Unity, but Christ; any other *medium* of Unity, but the Gospel-Covenant, nor any other kind of Unity, but the Unity of one Spiritual Body, Communion, or Society: that we are all united by the Gospel-Covenant in One Body to Christ, the one and Onely Head of the Universal Church.

1. The Unity of the Church must consist in its Union to some one Head. This is acknowledged by all Christians, and therefore I need not prove it; and it is as evident, that none can be the Head of the Universal Church, but only Christ, and that for this plain reason, because it is Union to Christ alone, which makes the Christian Church. The Church is the Church of Christ, and therefore he alone is the Head of his own Church: This the Romanists themselves grant, that Christ alone is the Head of his Church, and that the Bishop of

of *Rome* is only a vicarious Head, Christ's Vicar on Earth. But when we speak of the Unity of the Universal Church, part of which is translated to Heaven, and part still militant on Earth, it must be united in Christ alone; for as he needs no Vicar in Heaven, where he himself is immediately present, so there can be no Vicar on Earth, as a common Head of Unity for the Church on Earth and in Heaven; and therefore the Unity of the whole Church cannot consist in its Union to such a vicarious Head, as I observed before; and then there can be no other Head of Unity but only Christ.

2. It is as evident also, that the only *Medium* or Bond of this Union between Christ and the Church, is the Gospel-Covenant: for that is the Foundation of our relation to Christ: He is our Head and Husband, our Lord and Saviour, we his Subjects, Disciples, Spouse, and Body, by Covenant. And therefore the Sacraments of the New Covenant, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are the Federal Rites of our Union to Christ: Baptism is our Regeneration, or New Birth, whereby we are incorporated into his Body; in the Lord's Supper we spiritually eat his Flesh and drink his Blood, which signifies and effects as intimate an Union to him, as there is of our Bodies and the Food we eat; and this proves, that there can be no other Head of Unity, but only Christ, because the Gospel-Covenant unites us to none else: which I take to be St. *Paul*'s meaning, when he reproves the *Corinthian* Schism: 1 *Cor.* i. 12, 13. *Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?* That is, that there is no other Head, to whom we can be united but

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only Christ, who purchased the Gospel-Covenant by his Death, and into whose Name we are baptized; His alone we are to whom we are united by Baptism, we are in Covenant with none else, and therefore belong to him alone: if they might have owned any other Head besides him, who died for them, and into whose Name they were baptized, if Christ had made *Peter* the vicarious Head of Unity, as the Romanists pretend; St. *Paul*'s Argument against these Sidings and Factions, that one said he was of *Paul*, another of *Apollos*, a third of *Cephas* or *Peter*, had not been good, for at least those who were united to *Peter* were in the right: but St. *Paul* knew no other Head of Unity, but only Christ, because the Gospel-Covenant, which is the only *Medium* and Bond of Union, unites us to no other Head, and therefore those, who said they were of *Peter*, or belonged to him, as their Head and Center of Unity, which is the case of the *Church of Rome* at this day, were as great Schismaticks, as those who said they were of *Paul*.

Now this Covenant extends to the whole Church, and therefore unites the whole Church to Christ. For those who are translated into Heaven are still united to Christ by the same Covenant with the Church on Earth. There are several Duties indeed of this Covenant which the Saints in Heaven are exempted from, because their state and condition there is above them. Their Faith and Hope is turned into Sight and Enjoyment; their Spiritual Warfare is accomplished, for there is no Devil, nor Flesh, nor World to tempt them; the Mystical Supper of our Lord is celebrated by them not in external Symbols and Figures, but in a more divine manner, in the immediate presence of the Lamb; but tho the Duties of the Covenant change with their state

ſtate and condition of life, yet the Covenant is the ſame ſtill; by this Covenant it is, that they are in Heaven, and ſtill expect the completion of their happineſs in the Reſurrection of their Bodies immortal and glorious; and by the ſame Covenant it is, that we hope, when our Warfare is accompliſhed alſo to get to Heaven, and to riſe together with them, at the ſound of the laſt Trumpet: And therefore the whole Church in Heaven and Earth is One, by being united to the ſame Head by the ſame Covenant.

3. The Unity then of the Univerſal Church can conſiſt in nothing but this, that the whole Church, both in Heaven and Earth, is united in One Body to Chriſt. For ſince there is no other Head of Unity for the Church, but Chriſt, the formal reaſon of this Unity muſt conſiſt in the Union of the whole Church to Chriſt, which makes the Univerſal Church the *One Body* of Chriſt, and this is the Unity of the Church. For I think it is no leſs than a demonſtration, that the Unity of the Univerſal Church, which is part in Heaven, and part on Earth, cannot be the Unity of an organized Body, which muſt conſiſt in a regular Subordination of different Ranks and Degrees of men, as the Church on Earth does: For the Church on Earth and in Heaven, which is the One Church of Chriſt, is no ſuch one common governed Society; and therefore the Unity of the Church cannot conſiſt in the Unity of one External Government.

But how then is the whole Church but one Body? Truly I know no other way, but that they are all united to Chriſt in the ſame Covenant, and all who are thus united to him, Chriſt accounts his *One* Body. Thus Chriſt, as bearing his Church, is compared to a

Vine,

Vine, all whoſe Branches, we know, are united only in the Stock or Root, 15 *John* 1. and to an Olive-Tree, 11 *Rom.* 17. and to a Sheepfold, which conſiſts of ſingle and individual Sheep, which are one Fold only, becauſe they are under one Shepherd, 10 *John* 16.

It is true indeed, the Church is called alſo the Body, and the Spouſe of Chriſt, but as that relates to the Univerſal Church, it does not ſignifie an organical Body (though that the Church on Earth is alſo by Chriſt's own inſtitution, of which more hereafter) but it is ſo called for myſtical reaſons, which I ſhall briefly explain to you.

1. Now I firſt obſerve, that the Relation between Man and Wife is but an Emblem and Figure of that Union which is between Chriſt and his Church. Hence the Apoſtle exhorts Husbands *to love their Wives even as Chriſt loved his Church*; and tells us of Marriage, *It is a great myſtery, but I ſpeak concerning Chriſt and his Church*, 5 Epheſ. 25. 32.

2. That to be the Body and the Spouſe of Chriſt, ſignifies the ſame thing. Hence the Apoſtle argues, *That men ought to love their Wives as their own bodies*, 28 v. For *no man ever hated his own fleſh, but nouriſheth and cheriſheth it, even as the Lord the Church*, 29. *For we are members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones*, 30. So that the Wife is the Body, the very Fleſh of the Husband, and ſo is the Church of Chriſt.

3. To underſtand this matter, why the Church is called the Body and Spouſe of Chriſt, we muſt enquire why the Wife is called the Body of the Man, Fleſh of his Fleſh, and Bone of his Bone; and the reaſon of that is, becauſe the Woman was formed out of

of the Man. God at first formed Man with an entire humane Body, of the Dust of the Earth; and out of Man, while he slept, he formed the Woman; who though a distinct separate Person, yet was part of the Man, Flesh of his Flesh, and Bone of his Bone: And this was a natural Marriage, for two were by nature one Flesh; and this was the natural and fundamental reason of the Matrimonial Union. *For this cause shall a man leave his Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife, and they two shall be one Flesh.* For though other Women are not made as *Eve* was, no more than other Men are made as *Adam* was, yet the Woman being originally of the Man, the reason holds as to the whole kind; and in subsequent Marriages, a legal Ceremony and Contract does, what a natural Formation did at first, that is, unites two into one Flesh.

Thus the blessed Jesus, out of great pity and compassion to fallen man, intending to marry us unto himself, and thereby to recover us out of a state of sin and misery, first marries our Nature to himself by an hypostatical Union, as Man was created first, and then the Woman formed out of him. Christ took a humane Body of the substance of a pure Virgin, which signifies that it was an Espousable Nature which he took, and was a Pledge, and Earnest, and Medium of our Marriage to him. For though we cannot be married immediately to the Divinity, yet to a God Incarnate we may. For Marriage requires, that Husband and Wife be of the same nature.

But this is not enough, that the Husband and Wife partake of the same Nature, but the Woman must be formed out of the Man; which makes her Flesh of his Flesh, and Bone of his Bone. And thus accordingly,

cordingly the Church is formed out of the Body of Christ, and is in a mystical sense his very Flesh and Bones, as St. *Paul* speaks, *We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.* For the Sufferings of Christ in the flesh, gave life and being to the Church; he purchast to himself a Church by his own Bloud, that is, he formed to himself a Church out of his broken Body, as *Adam's* Body was broken, and a Rib taken out of him to form the Woman. And therefore as the Woman was made of the same Flesh with *Adam*, so the Sufferings of Christ in his humane nature purchased a Church not of Angels, but of Men, of the same nature with himself; as the Apostle observes, 2 Heb. 16. *For verily he took not on him the nature of Angels, but he took on him the Seed of* Abraham; and therefore is not the Saviour of Angels, but of men, is not married to the Angelical, but to the humane nature.

And to make the Analogie still more compleat, as the Woman was formed out of *Adam's* side, so was the Church out of Christ's side; for when he was pierced with the Souldiers Spear, there came out of his side both *Water and Bloud*, 19 John 34. and the Evangelist sets a peculiar remark upon it: *He that saw it bare record, and we know that his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe*, 35 v. and this is especially observed, and great weight laid on it; 1 John 5. 6. *This is he that came by water and bloud, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and bloud.* This some think signifies no more, but that it was a demonstration that he was truly dead; in that his heart was wounded, where there is a *Capsula*, called the *Pericardium*, which contains water, which being pierced, water came out together with

with bloud; but the water and bloud came out distinct though from the same wound, which was never known before, and cannot be done again by the greatest Artist; and though this might be a reason why St. *John* might take notice of it in his Gospel, where he gave an account of his death, yet it does not seem a sufficient reason why he should lay such weight on it in his Epistles; *This is he who came by water and bloud, not by water only, but by water and bloud:* and therefore I doubt not but the ancient Fathers were in the right, who tell us, that the two Sacraments of the new Covenant flowed out of his side, which are the formation of this spiritual Spouse his Church, the birth and the nourishment of it; Baptism and the Lords Supper, which came from his wounded body, and have both of them a peculiar respect to his Death and Passion.

Thus we see the Church is called Christ's Body and Spouse, for mystical reasons, because it is formed out of his broken Body, his Death and Sufferings giving life and being to the Church: and therefore it is but one Body, because all those who are redeemed by his Bloud, and united to him by Covenant, which is a kind of Marriage-Vow and Contract, are his Body and Spouse. And therefore the Sacraments of the new Covenant, Baptism, and the Lords Supper, do no otherwise unite us to each other, than they unite us all to Christ, which makes us all one Body: or as the Apostle speaks, with respect to the Lords Supper, *For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.* We all partake of the same Body of Christ, which is therefore called the

Communion of his Body and Blood; and therefore we all are but one Body: so that it is a vain thing to inquire after any other Principle of Unity for the whole Church, but the Union of all Christians to Christ, who are one Body by their Union to one Head.

But it may be objected against this, that this confines the Church to the company of the Elect, who are the mystical Body of Christ; that according to this Notion, there can be no visible Church upon Earth; for no man can tell who belongs to the mystical Body of Christ, which is made up only of true and sincere Christians, and no man can see who they are, without seeing their hearts. Now this is a mighty prejudice against any Notion, if it destroys the visibility of the Church, which is so plainly taught in Scripture, and does, for ought we know, unchurch the greatest Member of visible Church-Members; if the Church consist only of those who were elected from all eternity, and are in time called by the Grace of God to a state of real Holiness and Sanctification, and made the living Members of Christ's Body, I cannot possibly see how there can be a visible Church on Earth; for this internal Grace which makes a Church-Member is invisible, and therefore Church-Members are invisible too, and then I fear, the Church it self must be invisible, if all the Members of it are invisible; for invisible Members cannot make a visible Society: and to say, that the Field in which the Corn and the Tares grow together, is visible, will not make the Church visible, unless this visible Field, as visible, be the Church, and then the Tares as well as the Corn must be Church-Members:

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for to see where the Corn grows, if we cannot see the Corn, does not make the Corn visible; and if the Corn only be the Church, invisible Corn cannot make a visible Church. Which has made me often wonder that some learned Protestants and that of late too, have so much insisted on this Notion, which gives manifest advantage to their Adversaries; and serves no end, that I know of, but what may better be served without it.

But the Union of the Church to Christ, which I have now explained, is a visible Union; for we are united to Christ by the Gospel-Covenant, and the Covenant is visible, the Sacraments of the Covenant, Baptism, and the Lords Supper, are visible; the profession of Faith, and obedience to Christ, made by these visible Sacraments, is visible also; and therefore the Church, which is united to Christ by a visible Covenant, visible Sacraments, and a visible Profession, is visible also.

But you'll say, can wicked men then be Members of Christ's mystical Body? yes, no doubt but they may in this World, if they can be in Covenant with him. We are united by Covenant, and those who are thus united, are Members of his Body, and Christ has but one Body, which is his Church, and mystical Spouse. And what absurdity is there in saying, that men may be in Covenant with Christ, and not perform the conditions of the Covenant, nor obtain the rewards of it? This no man will deny, but that bad men, who live in visible Communion with the Church, who are baptized in the name of Christ, and feast at his Table, are visibly in Covenant with him; for in the Sacraments of the Gospel we do not receive

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that we are in covenant, no man can tell whether he be in covenant or not. Now all that are in covenant with Christ are his Body, and unless we can find two Covenants and two Bodies for Christ, we must grant that good and bad men in this World, are in the same Covenant, and Members of the same Body. Our Saviour tells us, that there are some branches in him which bear no fruit, but they are in him for all that, though they shall be taken away, and separated from him, 15 *John* 2. St. *Paul* dissuades the *Corinthians* from Fornication, by this Argument, that they are the Members of Christ: *Know ye not, that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? God forbid,* 1 *Cor.* 6. 15. Which supposes, that such a thing may be done, that the Members of Christ may be made Members of a Harlot; and that supposes, that very bad men may be Members of Christ's Body.

But are not all the Members of Christ mystically united to him? and can there be such a mystical Union between Christ and bad men? I answer, if by mystical Union be meant, being united in the same Life and Spirit, it is plain, that bad men are not thus mystically united to Christ, for they are not living, but dead Members of his Body, they are branches that are in the Vine, but bear no fruit; and yet may be Members of his mystical Body, which is so called, not upon account of any mystical Union, (which some men talk of but no man could ever explain) but for mystical reasons, as I have already shewed you. Now if those mystical reasons, for which the Church is called the Body of Christ, include wicked Professors,

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and concealed Hypocrites, as well as truly good Men, then I hope bad Men may be ſaid to be the Members of Chriſt's Myſtical Body without ſuch a Myſtical Union to him.

Now I obſerved before, the Myſtical Reaſon why the Church is called the Body of Chriſt, Fleſh of his Fleſh, and Bone of his Bone, is becauſe he purchas'd the Church with his own Blood; the Church is formed out of his broken Body, as *Eve* was formed out of the Body of *Adam*. And therefore if bad Men, who are in Covenant with Chriſt, are the purchaſe of his Blood, and have a Covenant-right to the expiation of it, and all the benefits procured by it, then they are the Members of his Myſtical Body, Fleſh of his Fleſh, and Bone of his Bone. And methinks no man ſhould deny, that thoſe who are in Covenant with Chriſt, ſhould have a Covenant right to the Expiation of his Death, and all the Bleſſings purchas'd by his Blood; for otherwiſe we cannot tell, what it is to be in Covenant, if it confer no right to the Priviledges of it: and yet no man has a right to the Purchaſe of Chriſt's Blood, but thoſe, who are his Body; and therefore if bad men may have ſuch a Covenant-right, as certainly they have, if they be in Covenant, then they are by Covenant united to his Myſtical Body.

If you object, that by this reaſon all Mankind are Chriſt's myſtical Body, for He died for all Men, and therefore they are all the Purchaſe of his Blood, and conſequently they are his Myſtical Body, which is formed out of his broken Body: I anſwer, it is true indeed, that in ſome ſenſe Chriſt died for all,

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because none are excluded from the Benefits of his Death, who unite themselves to his Body by Faith and Baptism; but yet he died for none, so as to give them an immediate Right and Title to the Purchase of his Blood; for his Purchase is confined to his Church, which is his Body; *He is the Saviour of the Body; He loved his Church, and gave himself for it.* And therefore his Church only is his Mystical Body, Flesh of his Flesh, and Bone of his Bone, and the Sufferings of his Natural Body extend no farther than his Mystical Body: and therefore Christ is said to have *reconciled both* (Jew and Gentile) *to God in one body by the cross, 2. Ephes. 16.* That is, he has reconciled all both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who by Faith and Baptism are united in his one Mystical Body, to God by his Sufferings on the Cross. So that we are not the Body of Christ, and cannot be said to be the purchase of his Blood, till we are united to him by Covenant.

This we may learn from that Analogy there is between the Law and the Gospel. The legal Sacrifices, especially that great Sacrifice on the Day of Expiation, were typically of the Sacrifice of Christ, and the Carnal *Israel* was a Type of the Spiritual *Israel*, or of the Christian Church, now as the Virtue and Expiation of Legal Sacrifices was applicable only to the Carnal *Israel*, so the Expiation of Christ's Death extends only to the Spiritual *Israel*, the Christian Church, which is Christ's Mystical Body; which one thing, if well considered, would answer all the Difficulties, and silence those fierce Disputes about Universal Redemption. However this shews what difference there is between bad Christians and the

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world of Infidels; the first are visibly in Covenant with Christ, and are the Purchase of his Blood, and have a Covenant-right to the redemption of it, and therefore are Members of his Mystical Body, for none else have any right to his Sacrifice; the other have no interest in him, nor relation to him. And if we will not allow of this, I desire to know, who those *Children of the Kingdom* are, that at the last day shall be shut out.

But is not our Mystical Union to Christ then an Union of Spirits, a participation of his Nature and Life, having his Spirit dwelling in us, being led by the Spirit, and walking in the Spirit? I answer, this is our Spiritual Union to Christ, this is to live in him, to be quicken'd by him, but it is not our Mystical Union, as that signifies such an Union, as makes us Members of his Mystical Body; for that in a strict proper sence is only a Covenant-relation: every Member of Christ's Mystical Body ought to partake of his Life and Spirit, or else they are onely dead and rotten Members, which shall be cut off, and shall never inherit Eternal Life; but such dead Members are Members still, till they are cut off, either by Church Censures in this World, or by the Sentence of Christ in the next.

This Participation of the Life and Spirit of Christ is not our Mystical Union to Christ, but the effect of it. We cannot receive the influences of Life and Grace from Christ, till we are united to him, and made the Members of his Body; for his Spirit onely quickens and animates his own Body; and we are united to his Body by Covenant, and by the Sacra-

Sacraments of it, which convey this Divine Life and Spirit to us; and therefore Baptiſm is our Regeneration, or New Birth, the beginnings of a New Life, becauſe it incorporates us into Chriſt's Myſtical Body, which puts us under the influences and communications of his Life and Spirit: as when a branch is engrafted into a ſtock, it receives nouriſhment and life from it. So that theſe divine and ſupernatural influences are conſequent upon our Union to Chriſt, and tho' all, who are united to Chriſt, have theſe influences of Grace, as the root naturally communicates its ſap and juices to all its branches, yet all do not improve it, do not digeſt it into principles of life and action, do not bring forth fruits worthy of it, like dead and withered branches, who cannot receive the ſap and nouriſhment, which aſcends from the root, and would quicken them, were not its entrance ſtopt and hindred; but notwithſtanding this, they are members and branches ſtill, though dead and fruitleſs: There is no account indeed had of them, Chriſt knows them not, and does not reckon them as his, and therefore the Deſcription and Characters of the Church in Scripture are ſuch as belong onely to living Members, to thoſe who are renewed and ſanctified, and quicken'd by the Divine Spirit; but yet they do belong to Chriſt's Myſtical Body, tho' they are in it onely, as a dead Branch is in the Vine.

But how can the Church on Earth, and the Church in Heaven be one Church and one Body, if the Church on Earth has ſuch corrupt and rotten Members in it, for the Church in Heaven has none but living and holy Members. I anſwer, the ſame Covenant

nant makes them the same Church, and the same Body of Christ, and that there are bad Men in the Church on Earth, and none but Saints in Heaven, does not prove, that they are two Churches, but that they are in two very different states. Of right, none but sincere believers, and truly pious men, ought to be Members of the Church on Earth, as well as in Heaven; but the government of the Church, the receiving in, and casting out of the Church, being intrusted with Men, who cannot see the Heart, or who are not careful in the Exercise of Discipline to preserve the Purity of the Church, secret Hypocrites may be received into the Church, and those, who are openly Prophane may not be cast out of it; but in the other World Christ makes the distinction, and separates the Chaff from the Wheat, and therefore the Church in Heaven can consist only of good Men, because bad Men can find no admission there. And besides this, it is agreeable enough to the state of the Church on Earth, and indeed cannot well be otherwise, that good and bad Men should be intermixt in it; because it is a state of Tryal and Discipline, of Growth and Improvement. The bad Men, as that signifies Hypocrites and Unbelievers, if they were known, ought not to be received into the Church, yet if they be, by the Influences of Grace, and the Instructions of the Word, and the Prayers of the Church, and the Examples and Conversations of good Men, and the prudent Exercise of Discipline, they may be reclaimed to Vertue, and become living Members of Christ's Body; those who were dead before may recover a New Life, by being engrafted into this Heavenly Vine: may in-

deed tho' all men are not equally wicked, yet no Man has this Divine Life, but onely from Christ, and the communications of his Grace, which he cannot receive from Christ, till he be united to him; and therefore the Apostles required no other qualification for Baptism, but onely Faith: the very worst of Men, who believed in Christ, and profess'd obedience to him, were received into the Church by Baptism, and put under the Influences of Grace, without expecting till they had first reformed their Lives; which, besides the Authority of the Apostles, seems to me much more agreeable to the Gospel-Dispensation, than that Discipline which was afterwards used in the Church, when they did not immediately baptize those, who profess'd to believe in Christ, but kept them in the state of Catechumens a great while, till they were instructed in the Principles of Christian Faith, and had given proof of a holy and vertuous life; which is to expect, that men should become new creatures, before they are born again, that they should walk in the Spirit, before they have received the Spirit in Baptism, that they should bring forth Fruit, before they are implanted into this Spiritual Vine. Now if Men, who have lived very wicked Lives, may be admitted to Baptism, upon their profession of Faith and Repentance, that in this Laver of Regeneration they may wash away all their Sins, and become new creatures, and receive the Spirit of Grace and Sanctification to reform their Lives, this shews, that the very Constitution of the Church on Earth is such; that there may be very bad Men in it, unless all, who are baptized should infallibly prove good Men: For

bad Men, who profeſs the Faith of Chriſt, and Repentance of their Sins, have a right to Baptiſm, where they muſt receive Grace to mortifie and ſubdue their Luſts, and renew their Natures, and yet if after Baptiſm they reſiſt the Grace and Spirit of God, they will continue bad Men ſtill, and this the Miniſters of the Church can never know, whether they will or not. Nay the Goſpel-Covenant admits the Children of Chriſtian Parents to Baptiſm, and it is impoſſible to know, how thoſe, who are baptized in their Infancy, will prove, when they are Men: and yet theſe are all Members of the Church, and the Myſtical Body of Chriſt, at leaſt till they are cut off by the Cenſures of the Church: and there is no inconvenience in this, if the Governours of the Church were but ſo ſtrict in their Diſcipline, as to prevent all Publick Scandals; for ſince the Church on Earth is the School and Nurſery of Vertue, where bad Men may be reformed, and become Saints, ſince Chriſt is that Spiritual Vine, from whom alone we can receive the communications of a Divine Life, it is very fitting, that all believers ſhould be received into the Church, and incorporated into Chriſt's Body, for it cannot be known, whether they will prove good or bad Men, fruitful or barren Branches, till they partake of the ſap and fatneſs of the Root, till they receive ſuch communications of Grace, as may renew them into a Divine Nature. And therefore to ſay, that none but real Saints are Members of the Church on Earth, is to make no difference between a School of Tryal, Exerciſe, and Diſcipline, and the ſtate of perfect and conſummate Souls; between a ſtate of Warfare, where the Victory is doubtful,

and the triumphant company of Conquerors; between those, who run in a Race, and those, who have won the Prize; for such a difference there is between the state of the Church on Earth, and in Heaven. We cannot run this Spiritual Race, unless we be in the Church, for there is no Prize, no Crown, to run for out of it. And therefore those who lose, as well as those who win the Prize, must be in the Church, and Members of it: They are all in the same Covenant, that if they overcome, they shall receive the Crown; good men conquer in this World, and triumph in Heaven; bad men are conquered, and they lose their Crown, and this makes the separation and difference between the Church in Heaven and Earth; in Heaven there are none but those, who have conquered; on Earth all, who run in the same Race, and are engaged in the same Warfare, are mixt together in the same Body and Society: those who conquer, and those who are conquered, are of the same Company on Earth, but none but Conquerors are crowned in Heaven.

Thus I have shewed, wherein the Unity of the Church consists, that the whole Church both in Heaven and Earth are united to Christ in the same Covenant, which makes it his One Mystical Body: and it was necessary to lay the foundation here; for without this it is impossible to understand what the Unity of the Church on Earth means, most of the mistakes in this matter being plainly owing to that first and fundamental mistake about the true Notion of Catholick Unity, as that includes the Unity of the Universal Church, part of which is translated to Heaven, and part still militant on Earth.

Thoſe who have been aware of this, that the Church in Heaven and Earth is but one Church, have hence concluded, that the Catholick Church is only the number of the Elect; that none but truly good men, who are renewed and ſanctified by the holy Spirit, are Members of Chriſt's myſtical Body; which makes the Church on Earth as inviſible to us, as the Church in Heaven. Others, when they talk of the Unity of the Church, never think of the Church in Heaven, and therefore advance ſuch a Notion of Church-unity, as excludes the Church in Heaven, as if the Church on Earth were the whole Church of Chriſt; or that the Church in Heaven and Earth were not one Church, or that the Notion of Church-unity muſt not relate to the whole Church, but only to one part of it. Thus, as I obſerved before, the *Romaniſts* do, who place the Unity of the Church in its Union and Subjection to the Biſhop of *Rome*, which can concern only that part of the Church which is on Earth, for the Church in Heaven is not under his government. Others conſidering that the Unity of the Church conſiſts in the Union of all the parts and members of it to Chriſt, have no regard at all to the Unity of the Church on Earth, as that alſo is one Body and Communion; and therefore it will be time now to apply this Notion of Church-unity to the Unity of the Church on Earth.

CHAP.

Chap. II.

Concerning the Unity of the Catholick Church on Earth.

IF the whole Church be one, to be ſure every part of it muſt be one with the whole, and therefore one with it ſelf, with that ſame kind of Unity which belongs to the whole. So that the Eſſential Unity of the Church on Earth, that which makes a Church and makes it one, is that all true Churches are Members of the One myſtical Body of Chriſt, as being all united to him, as to their Head, by the ſame Covenant. So that whatever makes a Church a true Church, makes it a Member of the One Catholick Church, or of the One Body of Chriſt. And here comes in what the Apoſtle makes eſſential to this *One Body*; *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptiſm*, 4 Eph. 5. which ſignifies what I ſaid before, being united to Chriſt in the ſame Covenant. For Chriſt is the *One Lord*, to whom we are united; the *One Faith* is the condition of this Covenant, and the *One Baptiſm* is the fœderal Rite of it, or the Sacrament of our Union to Chriſt. Where this is not, there is no Church; and where this is, there is but one Church; how many particular Churches, or diſtinct Communions ſoever this Church is divided into: From whence it as evident, that there never can be more than one Church

Church in the World: for those Nominal Churches, which have not the same Lord, the same Faith, the same Baptism, are no Churches; and all that have, are but one: Which makes it a ridiculous Triumph of the *Church of Rome*, as if we Protestants did not believe one Catholick Church, or could not tell where to find it, when we profess to believe but One Church, and that all true Churches are Members of this One Church.

For it is plain from this account, that though all the Churches in the World were united in one Ecclesiastical Body, yet this external visible Union is not the thing which makes them the one Body of Christ: They are one Body by being all united to one mystical Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, not by an external and visible Union to each other; this external Union is a Duty which all Christians and Christian Churches are bound to observe, as far as possibly they can; but all true Christians and Christian Churches are the One Body of Christ, whether they be thus visibly united or not. But for the better understanding this matter, we must consider,

I. The true Notion of the Catholick Church on Earth.

II. What the Nature and Unity of a particular Church is, and how every particular Church is a part of that Universal Catholick Church, which is the Body of Christ.

III. What that Unity and Communion is, which all distinct particular Churches ought to maintain with each other, and whence this Obligation results.

I. The

I. The true Notion of the Catholick Church on Earth. Now it is evident from what I have already discoursed, that the true Notion of a Church is the *cætus Fidelium*, or the company of the Faithful, of those who profess the true Faith of Christ, and are united to him by Baptism. There can be no other Notion of the Universal Church in Heaven and Earth, but the whole company and family of the Faithful, who are united to Christ by covenant, and are his mystical Body in the sense above explained: And if the Universal Church in Heaven and Earth be the whole company of the Faithful, the Catholick Church on Earth must be the whole number of the Faithful on Earth; for we must still retain the same Notion of a Church, where the whole consists of universal parts, for there every part has the same nature with the whole.

I know indeed of late the Clergy have in a great measure monopolized the Name of the Church, whereas in propriety of Speech, they do not belong to the definition of a Church: They are Members of the Church, as they are themselves of the number of the Faithful; and they are the Governours of the Church, as they have received Authority from Christ the Supream Lord and Bishop of the Church; but they are no more the Church, than the King is his Kingdom, or the Shepherd his Flock: and therefore St. *Paul* expresly distinguishes the Church from the Apostles and Ministers of it; 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. *God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that Miracles, then Gifts of Healing, Helps, Governments, diversities of Tongues.* These are placed in the Church, for the instruction,

ſtruction, edification, and good government of it; and therefore are of a diſtinct conſideration from the Church in which they are placed. Thus 4 *Eph.* 11, 12. *He gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt*; that is, the Church of Chriſt: which is therefore diſtinguiſhed from the Paſtors and Teachers of it. Thus in directing his Epiſtles to ſeveral Churches, he gives us the definition of a Church, 1 *Cor.* 1. 2. *Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus, called to be Saints, with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, both theirs and ours*: that is, the whole company of the Faithful. 1 *Epheſ.* 1. *Paul an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God, to the Saints which are at Epheſus, and to the Faithful in Chriſt Jeſus*: Which is the true definition of a Church. 1 *Col.* 2. *To the Saints and faithful Brethren in Chriſt, which are at Coloſſ.* And 1 *Phil.* 1. he expreſly diſtinguiſhes the Saints or Church, as that ſignifies the company of the Faithful from the Biſhops and Deacons: *To all the Saints in Chriſt Jeſus, which are at Philippi, with the Biſhops and Deacons.*

The Learned *Launoy* has produced various Texts of Scripture for this definition of the Church, that it is the company of the Faithful; and has proved by the Teſtimony of the Fathers in all Ages, even down to the *Council of Trent* it ſelf, that this was the received Notion of the Church, till it was altered by *Caniſius* and *Bellarmine*; *Caniſius* puts Chriſt's Vicar into the definition; that the Church is the

Johan. Launoius Nicolao Gatineo, Ep. 13. Vol. 8.

visible collection of all baptized Believers, under one Head, Christ in Heaven, and his Vicar on Earth; which makes the Church a Monarchy. *Bellarmine* defines the Church to be a company of men united together by the profession of the same Christian Faith, and the Communion of the same Sacraments, under the government of lawful Pastors, but chiefly of the Bishop of *Rome*, as the one Vicar of Christ on Erath; which makes the Church a kind of mixed and tempered Monarchy; the government of Bishops, and the Pope as Supream Vicar: whereas before these men, neither Pastors nor Bishops, much less the Pope of *Rome*, were ever put into the general definition of a Church: for as for St. *Cyprian*'s definition, I shall account for it hereafter.

And indeed it stands to reason, that they should not, for Pastors and Bishops are set over the Church, are Overseers of the Flock, to instruct and govern it, and therefore must be distinguished from the Church which they govern: The Church is the mystical Body of Christ, which is in subjection to Christ the Head; but the Bishops and Pastors of the Church, considered as such, represent the Head, and not the Body; for they receive their Power and Authority from Christ, and act in his place and stead: as he tells them after his Resurrection, *As my Father hath sent me, so send I you*, 20 John 21. And, *He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me*, 10 *Matth.* 40. and 13 *John* 20. And therefore as Christ the Head is distinguish'd from his Body, so are those also who act under the Head, and represent and exercise his Authority in the Church; as private Believers, they are the

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Members of the Church; as Church-Governours, they are the Vicars of Christ.

Now from hence I shall observe some few things, the use of which we shall afterwards better understand.

As 1. That Bishops and Pastors are not the Church, but the Governours of the Church: and therefore the Promises made to the Church, do not belong to the Bishops of the Church; as that *the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it:* which certainly proves, that the Church shall never totally fail, but does not prove, that the Bishops, or any Bishop of the Church, shall be Infallible. For the Bishops are not the Church: there are distinct Promises to the Church, and to the Pastors and Ministers of it, and they ought to be kept distinct; which will put an end to a great many Controversies between us and the *Church of Rome.*

Thus if St. *Paul* in his Epistle to *Timothy*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. calls the Church *the Pillar and Ground of Truth*, whatever that signifies, it belongs to the Church, or to the company of the Faithful, not meerly to the Pastors and Bishops of it: and therefore the Infallibility of the Pope or General Council can never be proved from it, though *the Pillar and Ground of Truth* should signifie Infallibility.

Thus whatever Authority Popes or General Councils may challenge in matters of Faith, yet if they decree any thing contrary to the common Faith of Christians, their Decrees are not the Faith of the Church, but the Faith of Popes and General Councils, who are not the Church, though they are the Governours of it: and yet under this venerable

Name of the Catholick Church, every packt Conventicle challenges an indiſputable Authority to its Decrees.

2. Nay, as Biſhops are not the Catholick Church, ſo neither are they the Repreſentatives of the Catholick Church; much leſs is any one Biſhop the whole Catholick Church virtual. The Office of a Biſhop is not to repreſent, but to govern the Church, and therefore Biſhops are not the Churches Repreſentatives by Inſtitution, no more than the King is the Repreſentative of his Kingdom: How then do they come to be the Churches Repreſentatives? Did all the Chriſtians in the World, who are the Catholick Church, ever intruſt them with this Power? Did they ever reſign up their Faith into the hands of their Biſhops? This never was done, and yet no man has a Repreſentative but by his own conſent; and if it could be done, Biſhops then muſt ſit in Council, not only as Biſhops, but as Lay-Repreſentatives, if two ſuch different capacities are not inconſiſtent; and yet Biſhops have challenged this Authority only as Biſhops, and excluded the Laity, nay Presbyters themſelves, from any Votes; and therefore ſuch Councils of Biſhops, who acted only as Biſhops, could not be the Repreſentatives of the Catholick Church. In matters of Diſcipline and Government, Biſhops act not as Repreſentatives, but Governours of the Church, by that Authority which they have received, not from the People, but from Chriſt; and their Decrees and Conſtitutions about ſuch matters, have a ſacred and venerable Authority, when they do not contradict any divine Laws and Inſtitutions. But Biſhops have no Authority over the Faith of the Church,

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nay the Church herſelf has no Authority to alter the Faith, and therefore can give no ſuch Authority to her Biſhops; however, if ſhe could, ſhe never did, and therefore no Council of Biſhops can be the Church-repreſentative in defining Articles of Faith. As Biſhops are the Supreme Paſtors and Teachers of the Church, they may declare, what the Faith is, and agree what Doctrines ſhall be taught in their Churches, and conſent to cenſure and excommunicate thoſe, who will not profeſs to believe as they do; but if they make any Decrees contrary to the common Faith of Chriſtians, no Chriſtian is bound to believe them, nor is ever the worſe for their Anathema's and Excommunications; and it is a ridiculous thing for them to call this the Faith of the Catholick Church, which is only the Decrees and Definitions of ſome Biſhops in it; who are far enough from being the Catholick Church. And this I think ſufficiently proves, that the moſt general Council, that ever was, may err, and yet the Catholick Church not err; for Biſhops are not the Catholick Church, nor ſo much as the Repreſentatives of it: and therefore could it be proved, that the Catholick Church could not err, this would not prove the Infallibility of a General Council, which is not the Church; for the Faith may ſtill be preſerved pure and uncorrupt among private Chriſtians, even when General Councils err.

3*ly*. I obſerve farther, that the whole Catholick Church on Earth is not one organized Body; for it is only the whole company of the faithful, and no Eccleſiaſtical Miniſters or Paſtors belong to the definition of it; and yet unleſs ſome Oecumenical Paſtor

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be essential to the Notion and Definition of the Catholick Church, it cannot be one organized Body. The Catholick Church indeed is organized by parts, that is, the whole Company of the Faithful are distributed into particular Bodies under the government of particular Bishops, which makes a particular Church, and is essential to the definition of it, of which more presently; but the Catholick Church itself is the whole Company of the Faithful, who are united in one Body to Christ only, who is the only Head of his Church. Now hence it evidently follows,

1. That no organized Church can be the Catholick Church, nor the Bishop of it an Oecumenical Pastor; because the Catholick Church is not organiz'd, but every organized Church is a particular Church. Which shews how vain the Pretences of the *Church of Rome* are to be the Catholick Church, and of the Pope of *Rome* to be the Universal Bishop.

2. It as evidently follows, that there neither is, nor can be any visible Tribunal of the Catholick Church, which shall be the Center of Catholick Communion, and have Authority over all particular Churches in Matters of Faith, and Worship, and Government. For the Catholick Church being no organized Body, it has no Authority, and can have no Tribunal.

1. It has no Authority. For the whole Company of the Faithful, which is the true Notion of the Catholick Church, are the Mystical Body of Christ, and in subjection to him, as a Wife is subject to her Husband. The Catholick Church is made up of particular and individual Christians, who are all imme-

immediately united to Christ their Head, and are made one in him; and though Bishops as the Ministers of Christ, have received Authority from him to govern the Church, which they exercise in particular Churches, over which they are placed, yet as Members of the Catholick Church, they are not considered as Bishops, but as private Christians: for it is not their Authority in the Church, but their Union to Christ, which makes them Members of his Body, and thus they are united to Christ no otherwise then all other private Christians are. Now if the Catholick Church be only a company of private and particular Christians, united immediately to Christ, and made one Body in him, the Catholick Church has no more Authority, than particular Christians have, which is none at all. The Catholick Church is united to Christ by a belief of his Gospel, obedience to his Laws, and a participation of his Spirit, which is a state of perfect and absolute subjection to him, and therefore can have no Authority to alter the Faith, to make a new Creed, or a new Gospel, which would be to have power over Christ, not to be subject to him. To be sure, unless we will grant this Authority to every particular Christian, the Catholick Church cannot have it, which is only the whole multitude of particular Christians, who are united singly to Christ, and made One Body in him; and therefore are not such a Body, as can make a new Faith, and new Laws, but are made One Body by embracing the same Faith, which they must receive from Christ, but have no Authority to make; because their receiving this Faith unites them into One Body in Christ, and they continue One Body in Christ,

Chriſt, no longer than they profeſs this Faith, and therefore never can have Authority to change it: where a multitude of Men unite themſelves into One Body or Civil Society, to form and model their own Government, and to make Laws for themſelves, there the whole Authority is in the Community, and they may make and alter and repeal Laws as they pleaſe: but where a Society is formed by a voluntary ſubmiſſion of ſingle and particular Perſons to known and ſtated Laws, and no man can be of this Society without ſubmiſſion to theſe Laws, nor continue longer in it, than he does ſubmit to them, it is a contradiction to ſay, that ſuch a Body of Men have any power over the Laws, becauſe it is only their ſubmiſſion to ſuch Laws, which make them ſuch a Society: The whole Society in this caſe have no more Authority than a ſingle Man, for they are not a Society for Government, but for Obedience and Subjection.

Chriſt indeed has placed an Authority in his Church for the Inſtruction and Government of it, but an Authority *in the Church*, and the Authority *of the Church*, are two very different things. The firſt ſignifies the Authority of Chriſt, who is the Head; the ſecond is the Authority of the Body, which is the Church, the Head has Authority over his Church, and may appoint what Miniſters he pleaſes to exerciſe this Authority, but the Church has no Authority at all, no more than the Body has, which is ſubject to the Head.

This may be thought a very nice diſtinction between the Authority *in the Church*, and the Authority *of the Church*, but it is as uſeful, as it is true.

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For thô the Authority of Christ must be much more sacred and venerable, than the Authority of the Church, whatever Authority it were supposed to have, yet the name of the Catholick Church is thought much more venerable than the name of Bishops, thô they are the Ministers of Christ; and therefore those, who would impose upon the Faith of Christians, talk of nothing less than the Authority of the Catholick Church, which sounds very big, and frights people into a submission. While they pretend only the Authority of Christ's Ministers, private Christians make bold to examine their Commission, and how far their Authority reaches, & whether they do not prevaricate in the exercise of this Authority, as it is possible Ministers may do; but the name of the Catholick Church strikes all dead, for who dare oppose the Decrees of the Catholick Church? which is to condemn the whole Catholick Church of Error or Heresie; who dares separate from the Catholick Church? which must be an unpardonable Schism, and a state of Damnation; since it is universally agreed, that there is no salvation to be had out of the Catholick Church; and thus when a packt Conventicle of Schismaticks and Hereticks usurp to themselves the name of the Catholick Church, they impose upon Christians under so venerable a disguise, and enslave them to their own Dictates; but now all these Amusements vanish, when we remember, that the Catholick Church has no Authority; that whatever the Authority of Bishops in or out of Council be, it is not the Authority of the Church, but the Authority of Christ, and it is not his Authority neither, when

they exceed their Commission, and teach such things as he has given them no Authority to teach; and therefore we may reject such a Council of Bishops, without condemning the Catholick Church, and renounce their communion, without separating from the Catholick Church.

And this very consideration, that the Catholick Church has no Authority, and therefore cannot innovate in Matters of Faith, nor alter the Laws and Institutions of our Saviour, is little less than a demonstration, that there is no Authority *in the Church* neither to do it. For the Bishops and Pastors of the Church, as therefore Christ's Ministers, so they are themselves Members of the Catholick Church; now as they are Members of the Catholick Church, they must receive nothing but what Christ has taught; for the Church is founded on the Faith of Christ, and has no Authority to alter it. Now is it imaginable, that Bishops as private Christians and Members of the Catholick Church are obliged to believe nothing but what Christ has taught, and yet as Bishops, or Christ's Ministers, have Authority to teach, what Christ has not taught? that is, that as Bishops they have Authority to teach that, which as private Christians, they themselves must not believe, if they will continue Members of the Catholick Church: nay, can we imagine, that Christ has given Authority to his Ministers to teach that, which the Catholick Church must not receive? for if the Catholick Church has no Authority, it must no more receive new Doctrines, than make them.

I know indeed, no body will pretend to an Authority of making new Articles of Faith, but only of declaring what the Faith is; but this is the very ſame thing, if this Authority of Declaring be ſuch as to oblige all people to believe ſuch Declarations without any Diſpute or Examination; for then they may make a new Faith under a pretence of declaring the old; as we ſee the *Council of Trent* has done, which has declared ſuch Doctrines, as the Chriſtian Church was a ſtranger to before: and there is no difference, that I know of, between declaring and making an Article of Faith, which was neither declared, nor made before.

And therefore Chriſtian Biſhops and Paſtors have no ſuch Authority either to make or to declare Articles of Faith, as can oblige all Chriſtians to believe it meerly upon their Definitions and Declarations: It is their Office to Preach the Goſpel, to convince and perſwade gainſayers by Scripture and Reaſon, which obliges all Chriſtians diligently and impartially to attend to their Inſtructions, but yet leaves every man at liberty to judge, whether they Preach the Goſpel of Chriſt, or their own Inventions.

2*ly*. That the Catholick Church has no Authority, is evident from this alſo, that it has no viſible Tribunal, wherein to exerciſe this Authority. For the Catholick Church is nothing elſe but the whole company or multitude of individual Chriſtians, who are all ſingly united to Chriſt, and made One Body in him, and conſidered as the Catholick Church are not the One Body of Chriſt, nor can be, under any o-

ther notion. So that had the Catholick Church any Authority, it could be exerciſed only by the whole multitude of Chriſtians, for nothing elſe is the Catholick Church, and this is as impoſſible, as it is for the whole multitude of Chriſtians to meet together in one place.

But cannot the Catholick Church meet and act by its Repreſentatives, as Kingdoms and Commonwealths do?

I anſwer; I have already proved, that all the Biſhops of the Church, much leſs any one Biſhop, cannot repreſent the Catholick Church; for as Biſhops they are not the Church, but the Governours of it under Chriſt; and no man ever yet thought of any other Repreſentatives for the Church; and it is evident *de facto*, that there are no other Repreſentatives; for the whole multitude of Chriſtians never did make choice of any ſuch Repreſentatives, and no man can be repreſented but by his own conſent: and if there could be any ſuch Repreſentatives made by the unanimous Vote of all the Chriſtians in the World, (which I think is morally impoſſible) yet then the higheſt and moſt ſoveraign Authority in the Church would be derived from the People, which, I ſuppoſe, the *Church of Rome* will not very well like.

Nay indeed it is abſolutely impoſſible, that the Catholick Church ſhould be repreſented; for the Catholick Church is the whole multitude of Chriſtians, conſidered as the whole company or multitude; now a multitude as a multitude can never be repreſented by any thing but itſelf, there can be no formal, nor virtual multitude, but the whole entire number.

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The Catholick Church ſignifies all Chriſtians, and if you leave out any of the number, it is not all, and therefore is not the Catholick Church. Now if the Catholick Church have any Authority, it muſt have it as it is the Catholick Church, that is, as it is the whole company of Chriſtians; for particular Chriſtians have no ſuch Authority, as all men grant; and therefore that which deſtroys the Catholick Church, muſt deſtroy its Authority too, and any thing leſs than all, makes it ceaſe to be Catholick; and therefore the Catholick Church cannot be repreſented by a few of the whole number, becauſe a few are not all, and therefore not the Catholick Church. It is a different caſe indeed, when every particular man has an original right and ſhare in the Power, and the whole power is not formally ſeated in the whole Body, for then it may by common conſent be contracted into one or more hands, by particular mens giving up their ſhare in the Government, as ſome fancy that civil Societies were firſt formed; but where the power is formally ſeated in the whole, and not in particular Members, as the Authority of the Catholick Church muſt be, if it be the Authority of the Church conſidered as Catholick, there it is evident the Authority muſt continue in the whole, and can by no conſent be put into a few hands; and then it is impoſſible that the Catholick Church can have any Repreſentatives, nor conſequently any viſible Tribunal.

And yet that Diſpute between the *Church of Rome* and ſome Proteſtant Divines, which is managed with ſo much warmth and zeal, about the perpetual

tual visibility of the Church, issues in this controversie about a visible Tribunal of the Catholick Church; for nothing else will do the Protestant Cause any hurt, or the Popish Cause any good. We do say, and we may safely say, that there always has been, and ever will be a Visible Church; for while there are any men, who visibly profess Christianity, there will be a visible Church: And what then? what then? Why then you must hear the Church; then you must submit to the Authority of the Church; then you must believe as the Church believes, and receive your Faith from the Decrees and Definitions of the Church; But pray why so? Has every visible Church this Authority? No; but the Catholick Church has. Suppose that; but how shall I speak with the Catholick Church, which is dispersed over all the World, and is nothing else but the whole number of Christians all the World over? Now it seems impossible for me to speak with all the Christians in the World, and to know what their Belief is in all matters of controversie: and though the Catholick Church is visible, and part of it is to be seen in *England*, and part in *Holland*, and part in *France*, &c. yet no man can see it all together, nor speak with all the Christians in the World together; and therefore tho' the Catholick Church be visible, it cannot determine any one controversie, unless there be some visible Catholick Tribunal, from which we must receive the Faith of the whole Church: This the Papists assert, and make the *Church of Rome* to be that visible Catholick Church, or visible Tribunal

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of the Catholick Church, to which all Christians are bound to submit. Now besides what I have already proved, that the Catholick Church neither has, nor can have any such visible Tribunal, suppose such a thing might be, yet this Dispute about the visibility of the Church, is nothing to the purpose: for though the Church be visible, it does not hence follow, that the Catholick Church has such a visible Tribunal, to which all Christians must submit; and if the visibility of the Church does not prove one Supream Catholick Tribunal, what do the Papists get by the Churches visibility; or what do the Protestants lose by it?

The *Church of Rome* is a visible Church, and so is the *Church of England*; and if meer visibility give this Authority to a Church, the *Church of England* has as good Authority as the *Church of Rome*, because it is as visible a Church.

4. In the next place I observe, that the essential Unity of the Catholick Church is not an external and visible Union of an organized Body, because the Catholick Church it self is not an organized Body. There is and can be but one Catholick Church, because the whole company of Christians is this Catholick Church; but then the essential Unity of the Catholick Church does not consist in an external and visible Union of all Christians, which is the Unity of civil Societies, of Kingdoms, and Commonwealths, and other inferiour Corporations, which are united under one visible Government, which knits and tyes them together, as Nerves and Sinews do the Members of the natural Body; but though

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there be an external and viſible Union in and between particular Churches, of which more preſently, yet the Unity of the Catholick Church conſiſts only in the Union of all Chriſtians to Chriſt, which makes them his one myſtical Body.

This is a very material point in oppoſition to the Pretenſions of the Biſhop of *Rome*, who will needs be the Supream and Oecumenical Paſtor, and Head of Unity to the Catholick Church; and though the Chriſtian World never owned him ſo, as has been abundantly proved by learned men, eſpecially by the Learned Dr. *Iſaac Barrow* in his Treatiſe of the Popes Supremacy, which is a ſufficient confutation of ſuch a Claim, yet it will be of great uſe to ſhew from the Nature of the Catholick Church, and the eſſential Unity of it, that it cannot be ſo; and there are ſeveral conſiderations, which will make this very evident.

1. That there is no other Head for the whole Catholick Church on Earth to be united to, but only Chriſt: for the Catholick Church is the whole company of Chriſtians; and to whom can the whole company of Chriſtians be united, but only to Chriſt? For the whole Clergy, as well as Laiety, are included in the Notion of the Catholick Church, in the whole company of Chriſtians; and therefore unleſs you can find out a Biſhop who is not of the number of Chriſtians, (and ſuch an one would be a very monſtrous Head for the Chriſtian Church) he cannot be the Head, becauſe he is a Member of the Catholick Church, and muſt himſelf, with the reſt

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of Christians be united to the Head: Which I think is a demonstration that no Bishop can be the Head of the Catholick Church, because it is a contradiction to be the Head and a Member of the same Body. A Bishop is the Pastor and Governour of a particular Church, and a Member of the Universal Church; but to be the Head of the Universal Church, of which he himself is a Member, is a contradiction.

2. Nor can the essential Unity of the Church consist in our Union to any other Head but Christ, because it is our Union to Christ alone, which makes the Church; and that which makes the Church, must make it one; for what does not belong to the essence of a thing, cannot be the principle of an essential Unity. It is the Church of Christ, because it is united to him, and to him only, by Faith and the Christian Sacraments; and therefore it is the One Church of Christ, because the whole Church is united to him, and to him only, as it must be, if no other Union can make a Church; and where there is but one Head of Union, there can be but One Body. No other Union can make a Church, and therefore no other Union can be essential to the Unity of the Church.

3. And therefore though our Saviour had appointed an Universal Pastor, as the Bishop of *Rome* pretends to be, yet he could not have been the Head of Unity to the Catholick Church; he had in that case been the Supream Governour, whom all Christians had been bound to obey, nay more than that, he had been the Center of Church Commu-

nion to all Christians; which is the external and visible Unity of the Church, when all Christians live in the same Communion, like one Houshold and Family. But there is a vast difference between the essential Unity of the Church, and the external Exercise of it in a visible Communion among Christians; between being one and living in Unity; Union to Christ alone makes the Church one, but the exercise of this Unity in a visible Communion, is a Duty which results from our Unity, and must be expressed in such ways as Christ has prescribed, of which more anone; and had Christ appointed an Universal Pastor, communion with, and subjection to, this Universal Pastor had been necessary to the external Unity of Church-communion, but yet had not been that which makes the Church One, which is one before and without it; the not distinguishing of which, has occasioned great mistakes in this matter, as will appear in the process of this Discourse.

4. I observe farther, that there is a wide difference between being a Supream Pastor, and a Vicarious Head of the Church, a Title which is given to the Bishop of *Rome*, not without great injury to Christ our Head. Christ, had he pleased, might have appointed a Supream Pastor for the Government of his Church; but as he is Head of the Church, he cannot have a Vicar, or Vicarious Head: for though a Head signifies a Supream Governour too in Scripture phrase, yet Christ is not merely a Head of Government, but of Union; and though a governing Head may have a Vicar or Lieutenant, yet

a Head of Union either, no more than a natural Head can, for the Union between Christ and his Church, is as immediate, as between the Head and the Members, between the Husband and the Wife, which will admit of no intermediate Vicars.

The Church is called the Body and Spouse of Christ, as I have already observed, for mystical reasons, because it is formed out of his broken and crucified Body, as *Eve* was out of the Body of *Adam*; upon which account we are said to be Flesh of his Flesh, and Bone of his Bone; that is, the Church is redeemed and purchased by the Blood of Christ: and thus he is the Head of that Body which he himself has bought at the price of his Blood. We are united to Christ by Faith in him, by being baptized in his Name, by feeding on the Sacrament of his Body and Blood; the effect of this Union is, that we receive from him the pardon of our sins, and the influences of his Grace and Spirit. Thus Christ is our Head, and thus none but Christ can be the Head, not so much as the Vicarious Head of the Church, as I think I need not prove. We are redeemed by no other but Christ, and therefore the Church is his mystical Body only; we are united to no other by Faith and Sacraments; our Union to no other person can entitle us to the pardon of sin, and the grace of the holy Spirit, and therefore Christ alone is the Head to Union to his Church; it is a Church, and it is one Church, not by its Union to the Supream Pastor on Earth, if there were such an one, but by its Union to Christ: for the Unity of the Church consist in its Union to its Head, and it is evident

that the Church can have no other Head but Christ; and therefore can have no other principle or center of Unity.

Now from hence it plainly follows, that no Christian can separate from the Catholick Church (in this sense of it, as it signifies the whole company and family of Christians, which is the true Notion of the Catholick Church) while he continues a Christian; for that is a contradiction, to be a Christian, and not to belong to the whole number of Christians; that is, to be a Christian, and to be no Christian: for if he be a Christian, he belongs to the number of Christians, and then he is a Member of the Catholick Church, and consequently not a Separatist from it: Nothing can separate us from the Catholick Church, but what forfeits our Christianity, either a final Apostacy, or such Heresies as are equivalent to Apostacy: Which shews how vainly the *Church of Rome* charges us with Schism and Separation from the Catholick Church, because we disown the Authority of the Pope, their pretended Head of the Church, and reject a corrupt Communion, though we are Christians still, and we hope of a much purer Communion than they are. Schism and Separation is a breach of the external and visible Communion of the Church, not of the essential Unity of it; the Church is one Church still, whatever Breaches and Schisms there are in its external Communion; for the Unity of the Catholick Church consists in the Union of the whole to Christ, which makes them one Body in him, not in the external Communion of the several parts of it to

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each other. And therefore it is not a Separation from one another, but only a Separation from Christ, which is a Separation from the Catholick Church. But what the true Notion of Schism is, I shall discourse more at large hereafter.

5. I observe further, that the Indefectibility of the Catholick Church does not depend upon the Indefectibility of any organized Churches; for the Catholick Church does not consist of organized Churches, as organized, but is made up of particular Christians; and therefore while the whole Race of Christians does not fail in the World, the Catholick Church cannot fail. There is no Promise, that I know of, to any particular Church, that it shall not fail, and all organized Churches are particular. Several of them have totally failed, others have been very greatly corrupted both in Faith, and Manners, and Worship, but had these Failures and Corruptions been much greater and more general than ever they have been yet; while there are a number of good Christians preserved in the World, though not united in one visible Body, the Catholick Church does not fail; for since the Catholick Church is not an organized Church, nor made up of organized Churches, as such, though all the particular organized Churches in the World were so corrupt, as not to deserve the Name of True Churches, if there be a number of good Christians preserved among them, though unknown, and concealed, as it was in the time of *Elias*, the Catholick Church is safe, amidst all the corruptions of particular Churches.

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I am abundantly satisfied that there always has been, since the first planting of Christianity in the World, and I believe always will be to the end of the World, a true visible Church, but yet I do not think the Indefectibility of the Church necessarily requires a perpetual Visibility, that the Church must needs be owned to fail, if there should be no visible organized Church, with whom we could hold communion. This indeed would mightily eclipse, but not extinguish the Church; for it is certain the Catholick Church subsists in single and individual Christians, who may lie concealed from publick notice, and therefore it is not sufficient to prove that the Church has failed, though there were no visible Society of Christians, but what were corrupted with damnable Practices and Errors.

It is very true, were there no visible Society of Christians, no Administration of Baptism, by which Men are made Members of the Christian Church, and this State should continue so long, till the whole Race of baptized Christians were lost in the World, there would be too much reason then to say, that the Church had failed; for I cannot see how the Church can subsist without a number of baptized Christians; but this never was the state of the Church, and I believe never will be, for Antichrist himself sits in the Temple of God, which supposes that even in his reign there is a visible Society of Christians. Now how corrupt and degenerate soever the External State of the Visible Church may be, while there is a Society of baptized Christians, though so corrupt in their External Policy and Government,

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Faith, and Worship, that it may admit of a dispute, whether they are a true Christian Church or not, yet tho' the visible state of the Church may be Antichristian, there may be an invisible number of Christians among them, who may preserve themselves from the Corruptions, Superstitions, Heresies, and Idolatries, of the visible Church, and in these men the Catholick Church is preserved from a total failure.

Indeed this is the only difference between Protestant Divines in this Matter: they all agree, that the Catholick Church shall not fail, because Christ has promised it shall not fail, that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it; but some doubt, whether there shall be always a true visible organized Church in the World. They agree, that there shall be always a visible Society of Christians in the World, who shall profess the whole Christian Faith, and administer the true Christian Sacraments, but they differ, whether such a Church may be called a true Christian Church, if together with the true Christian Faith and Sacraments, they set up an Antichristian Hierarchy, and impose an Antichristian Faith and Worship. Those, who affirm, that such a Church is a true Christian Church, do consequently teach, that the true Church shall be always visible, tho it may be corrupt, even to the degree of Antichristianism; those who affirm, that such a corrupt Church is not a true Church, do also consequently affirm, that the true Church may be sometimes invisible, and consist only of such private Christians, as preserve themselves from those corruptions, which unchurch the visible Church: I may have occasion to consider this more hereafter,

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all that I obſerve at preſent is, that this does not alter the caſe, as to the indefectibility of the Church; for while there is a viſible Society profeſſing the Chriſtian Faith, and adminiſtring the Chriſtian Sacraments, the Catholick Church may ſubſiſt in an inviſible and unorganized number of Chriſtians, who profeſs the true Faith without ſuch corrupt and Antichriſtian Mixtures. Were the Catholick Church an organical Body, then indeed it muſt be always viſible, and the Church would fail, if ever it became inviſible; but if the Catholick Church be an unorganized Body of Chriſtians, who are united only in Chriſt, it is poſſible, that it may be unknown and inviſible, as great numbers of private Chriſtians may be, and yet the Church not fail.

Now this ſhews the weakneſs and fallacy of ſeveral Arguments uſed by the *Church of Rome*. As 1. That the perpetual viſibility of the Roman Church proves it to be that indefectible Church, of which our Saviour promiſed, that the Gates of Hell ſhould not prevail againſt it. A Promiſe, which all men grant, our Saviour made to the Catholick Church, not to any particular Church, that is, to the whole company of Chriſtians, that there ſhould never want a ſucceſſion of true Believers in the World, not to any particular organized Church, or Body, of Chriſtians, ſuch as the *Church of Rome* is. And therefore the indefectibility of the Church cannot prove, that it ſhall be always viſible, and then the uninterrupted viſibility of any Church cannot prove, that it is indefectible; for if the indefectible Church may be ſometimes inviſible, then that viſible Church may not

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be always indefectible; when the indefectible Church is invisible, to be sure that Church, which at that time is visible, is not the indefectible Church, and thus I am sure it may be, whether it has been or not, but if it may be, the Argument is naught.

2. And so is that Argument to prove the Church to be infallible, because it is indefectible. That it cannot err, because it never shall so grievously err as to cease to be a Church. The indefectibilty of the Church, as you have already heard, does not necessarily prove, that there shall be any one visible, organized Church, which shall never fail; for the Church does not fail, while there are any true Christians in the World; it may be preserved in a number of single and concealed Christians, who are neither known to one another, nor much less to the World. And therefore if indefectibility proves infallibility, it proves only, that there shall be some private infallible Christians, not that there is any visible infallible Church. For it can prove only those to be infallible, who are indefectible, and therefore since it does not necessarily prove, that any visible organized Church shall be indefectible, it cannot prove any such Church to be infallible neither. The infallibility of private Christians the *Church of Rome* will not allow, and yet if indefectibility prove infallibility, this is all the infallibility which the indefectibility of the Church can prove, that there shall always in the greatest degeneracy of the Church be a number of private infallible Christians, who shall continue in the true Faith and Worship of Christ. When our Saviour

viour says, that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against his Church, we may consider it either as a Promise, or a Prophecy, or both, that there always shall be some sound and orthodox Believers in the world, who in the greatest degeneracy of the Church shall be the Seeds of a Reformation, and a new visible resurrection of it; now I hope Christ can make good such a Promise (if we consider it as a Promise) without bestowing infallibility upon any Christians, for men may be orthodox Christians without being infallible; and if we consider it as a Prophecy, I hope Christ can certainly foretel things, which have no necessary causes, and then he can foretel, that there shall never want true Believers, tho' it is possible, there might be none; that all Christians shall not err, tho' they are all fallible, and therefore may err; and then neither the Promise nor the Prophecy can prove the infallibility of any Christians: and this is all that Protestants can mean, when they say, that the Catholick Church cannot err in Fundamentals, not that there is any visible Society of Christians, which is infallible in its definitions of fundamental Doctrines, but that the Catholick Church or the whole number of Christians shall never err fundamentally, that is, that there shall always be some true and orthodox Believers in the Church.

3. Nor is it a good Argument to prove any Church to be a new upstart Church, because after some time of concealment it resumes its visibility, and appears openly in the World. The stabbing Question, as the *Church of Rome* thinks, to the Reformed Churches is, Where was your Church before *Luther*? Those who own

own the *Church of Rome* with all her Corruptions to be a true Church, have a plain and easie Answer to this; That the Church was before *Luther*, where it was afterwards; for they did not make a new Church, but only reformed that part of the old, which consented to such a reformation; they profess the same Faith still, have the same Sacraments, and the same Christian Worship, but purged from those Innovations and Corruptions, which had deformed the visible Communion of the Roman Church, which can no more make a new Church, than a man's washing off the dirt makes a new Face. And I confess, I think, those who deny the visible organized *Church of Rome* to be a True Church, do not want a good Answer neither. For during the degeneracy of that Church, the Church might subsist in those private Christians, who preserved themselves in a great measure from the corruption of that Church, which might more easily be done before the Reformation than since; for many of their Doctrines and Practices were not then so peremptorily decreed by their Councils, nor so strictly imposed upon the consciences of men, as the *Council of Trent* has since done. And there are Evidences enough, that there never wanted some in all Ages, who have condemned their Innovations, and that profound Ignorance, wherein that Church brought up honest and devout men, was the true reason, why there were not more; now all these men may be reckoned the Seeds of the Reformation, out of which a visible Church would spring, as soon as a new light broke in upon the World. There was no failure of the Church, tho' it was obscured and concealed; we

may as well say, that it is a new Sun, which rises every Morning, not that which set at Night, as make a new Church of the visible Resurrection of old and primitive Christianity, the Profession of which was never lost, tho the Professors of it were not so visible. If the true Church be indefectible and never fails, it can never be new again; and if the indefectibility of the Church may be preserved in some private and unknown Christians, the want of a visible Society of such pure and orthodox Christians cannot prove, that the Church has failed, and then when the old Christian Church appears again with a new glory, it is ridiculous to call it new, only because for some years it has been concealed.

Thus I have considered the true Notion of the Catholick Church on Earth, which there is so much talk of in our Disputes with the *Church of Rome*, and I hope have made it appear, how little Service this can do them.

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